

# Ongoing Innovation Creates Better Processes and Products



KMC develops unique metal forming equipment, such as this multi-process production machine for extruded-cushion clamps.

Innovation is part of everyone's job at KMC – from our dedicated Research & Development department, to the machine operators on the manufacturing floor. Time and again, we have demonstrated the ingenuity to develop processes and products that allow us to serve our customers better.

KMC's innovation can be seen at all levels of the company, but it's perhaps most apparent among the R&D staff, which is specifically focused on these strategic initiatives:

- Continuous improvement
- Cost reduction
- Process technology advancements
- Production machine design and building
- Value engineering

## **HARNESSING PROCESS TECHNOLOGY**

At KMC, research and development efforts go hand in hand with our commitment to technology. In 1988, we were among the first companies to embrace the potential of laser cutting and forming, and we've been growing our laser capability ever since. Substantial investments in laser machines, coupled with ongoing advancements in our CAD technology, allow us to precisely cut and form metal without the time and expense of hard tooling. At KMC, laser technology has revolutionized the prototyping process, as well as enhanced our ability to address short-run production requirements in a highly cost-effective manner.

Through our research and development initiatives, we have also designed, built and patented several types of metal forming machines. In one recent case, a KMC-patented machine pushed the boundaries of slide forming, increasing the application possibilities for this highly efficient technology; in another case, a KMC production innovation enabled us to enter the extruded rubber clamp market with a highly competitive and well-received new product line.



COL/CDL clamps utilize extruded cushions of EPDM or other special-purpose materials.



Coordinate measuring machines, along with other inspection and gauging devices, are essential to KMC's quality program.

### PRODUCT IMPROVEMENTS

The product line that resulted from our R&D work in extruded clamps was the COL/CDL Series wire and tube clamps, which feature EPDM cushions for enhanced protection and durability. And, based on customer need, we have also added neoprene and silicone cushions as options, as well as a range of metal choices.

Not all R&D leads to a completely new product line. Sometimes, subtle design changes elevate usability in important ways. For instance, as a result of an R&D effort years ago, many KMC standard products feature a characteristic "contoured" clamping diameter that makes our clamps easy to close and ensures proper hole alignment.

Product improvements may also be the result of material innovation. The development of our exclusive HellerGard™ pre-coated steel product is one recent example. Without the use of hexavalent chromium and its associated environmental concerns, HellerGard delivers exceptional corrosion resistance. It also eliminates the need for post-plating processes – shortening production times, controlling cost, and optimizing part quality and manufacturability.

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### OUR QUALITY COMMITMENT

*The KMC quality system ensures adherence to customer specifications through contract review, advanced quality planning, production part approval processes, and a comprehensive inspection and test program. An active continuous improvement philosophy drives refinement of our products and processes, and improves service to our customers.*

*Evidence of KMC's commitment to quality is our certification to ISO/TS 16949 and ISO 9001:2000 quality standards. While ISO/TS is specific to customers in the automotive industry, this certification signifies to all customers that KMC is committed to the highest quality in product, engineering and manufacturing processes, and customer service.*

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